

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

[redacted] 2425-63
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20 MAR 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : OXCART Program Status

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1. Since the first flight of an OXCART A-12 aircraft, 26 April 1962, 160 flights, totaling 205.27 flight hours, have been made with five aircraft at the test site [redacted]. Eighteen flights totaling fifteen hours occurred with an aircraft equipped with one J-75 and one J-58 engines and eleven flights totaling nine hours with aircraft configured with two J-58 engines. Henceforth, all but two aircraft (trainer and a test aircraft) will be equipped with J-58 engines. Eventually all aircraft will be retrofitted with J-58 engines.

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2. Five A-12 aircraft now are in flight test. On 20 March, a sixth aircraft was delivered to [redacted]. Attachment #1 contains a delivery schedule for the remaining nine A-12 aircraft of the fifteen under procurement.

3. Until recently the most serious roadblock on the program was the critical shortage of J-58 engines. Presently seventeen of the fifty-seven engines under procurement have been delivered. Production and testing of the highly complex engine fuel controls are the pacing factors.

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4. The aircraft, engines and other critical components, including the inertial navigation system, stability augmentation system, autopilot, air induction system, pilot environment equipment, cameras [redacted]

have performed reasonably well within the limits of testing so far in the flight test program. The usual routine problems have been encountered and system debugging and optimisation of equipments is underway.

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6. In the next few months maximum effort will be directed to reaching intended speed and altitude in the flight test program so that the aircraft, related systems, equipment and sensors can be checked under the high temperature and high altitude environment. The top speed and altitude thus far attained in flight test has been Mach 2.49 and 70,000 feet. Meanwhile, four of eventual ten operational pilots selected in the A-12 and are undergoing training. Bases for aerial refueling tankers are being readied and other logistical and operational preparations are underway.

Approved by
HERBERT DOUVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

cc: DDCI

Attachment:
1 - Aircraft Delivery Schedule

Signature Recommended:

JACK C. LEDFORD
Colonel, USAF
Assistant Director, OSA

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C/DD/OSA [redacted]
(20 March 1963)

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